

STIRRINGS IN ARABY

Tribal Feuds and World Politics

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THE unrest and instability provoked by the disintegration of centuries-old social and religious conceptions in Syria, Egypt, and other Moslem states with a window on the West are spreading like a plague to even the remotest corners of Arabia. There is now social ferment in the Saudi kingdom, in Yemen, Kuwait, and Aden, with the usual repercussions on local big-power interests. Saudi forces and British-controlled native levies have fought two pitched battles recently for the oasis of Buraimi. Other British forces, including regular units of the army and Royal Air Force, have been in action around Aden and in the Hadhramaut. Even unexplored Oman has edged its way onto the international agenda.

When, on November 23, 1955, the Arab League secretariat in Cairo received its first official call from a senior Soviet diplomat—the then ambassador Daniel Solod, now head of the Near Eastern section of the Soviet Foreign Ministry—the subjects most keenly discussed were neither the ludicrous Baghdad Pact nor even Arab-Israeli relations, but Britain's wrangles with the Arabs over Buraimi, the Aden Protectorate, and Oman. (The Arab League secretariat later placed at the disposal of the Soviet embassy in Cairo

important extracts from its archives dealing with these problems.) And when Sir Anthony Eden visited President Eisenhower at the end of January, Buraimi and Oman were again overlooked.

THE complex feuds and inter-tribal tensions of Arabia multiply as one moves southwards down the great peninsula—until, south of the Tropic, they reach an intensity bordering on self-caricature. In Britain's Aden Protectorate until only a few years ago, half a dozen tribal and sub-tribal alliances were permanently at war with one another, over issues long since forgotten, and every other village had a feud with its nearest neighbor. Cultivators spent much of their leisure burning each other's crops and maiming each other's livestock, and frequently had to crawl along trenches and gullies to get to their fields.

In Yemen, the present Head of State, the Imam Seif el-Islam ("Sword of Islam") Ahmed, gave tribesmen a free hand to loot his capital, Sanaa, following his father's assassination in 1948, and plucked up courage to reside there himself only last year. Also last year, after being rescued by a tribal uprising while besieged in his harem, he ordered the decapitation of his brother Seif el-Islam Abdullah and the incarceration of three other brothers.

The British administration at Aden—backed, very forcefully at times, by the Royal Air Force—has devoted a major part of its energies over the last two decades to stamping out feuding and inter-tribal conflict. Veteran Political Officer Harold Ingrams was obliged to collect, by cajolery and threats, more than a thousand sheikhly signatures, hieroglyphs, and thumbprints on one truce agreement alone before it could become fully

THE Arab world, for whose friendship both West and East are bidding energetically today, is little known in its historical "heartland," the Arabian Peninsula, an area of desert and thin coastal settlement stretching southward between the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf. RAY ALAN, who describes the incursion of 20th-century forces into this structure of innumerable bickering potentates, is a British journalist whose "beat" is the Middle East. His "Strange World of the Druzes" was published in our number of last January.

effective. The construction of a major oil refinery at Aden, after the loss of Abadan, absorbed a sizable proportion of unproductive local manpower, and the relatively high wages now being paid there are convincing thousands of former tribesmen that regular employment can be more profitable than, in Gertrude Bell's words, stealing each other's washing.

In independent Yemen, on the other hand, there is no paternalistic benevolent despotism to wean the population from its medieval pastimes: there is simply despotism *tout court*, mitigated occasionally by assassination. The shifting coalitions of fratricidal plotters perpetually swirling around the throne are all too eager to exploit vendettas and inter-tribal friction whenever possible.

But both in the Aden Protectorate and in Yemen old feuds and antagonisms are beginning to be superseded by new alignments with a distinctive socio-political tinge. The running is being made increasingly by urban "Free Yemen" and "Free Aden" groups based on Cairo, Aden, and Mukalla, and composed largely of merchants and young men who have acquired a taste for the 20th century.

An extraordinarily high percentage of the coastal merchants of this corner of Arabia, living at the halfway house between Western Europe and the Far East, have been at least once to Liverpool, Marseilles, Genoa, or Singapore, and many have spent several years overseas; and a similar leavening of educated youths, including merchants' sons and the scions of aristocratic and sheikhly families, have been to school in Cairo, Alexandria, and Beirut. Merchants and students alike have brought back with them from the "West" not only an eye for automobiles and pin-up girls, but a vocabulary studded with magic words like "development" and "reform" and an appetite for representative institutions.

SIGNIFICANTLY, even the Imam of Yemen has taken recently to speaking in something approaching a modern idiom. Shaken, no doubt, by his father's assassination in 1948 and his own narrow escape this year,

disturbed by the response within his kingdom to "Free Yemen" propaganda seeping in from Yemenite exiles in Aden, and spurred by stories of the showers of gold now raining upon the rulers of Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, he has granted an oil concession to a German firm, given other German enterprises contracts for the construction of a cement works, a tannery, and a textile mill, and sent his eldest son, the Emir Badr, to Cairo to recruit a token number of highway engineers and teachers and offer a royal pardon to educated "Free Yemenites" willing to return and lend a hand in modernizing the country.

But such modernization as is envisaged in courtly circles is outward and technical only—and more likely to heighten social tensions than appease them. Returning emigrés will have their pardons revoked if they indulge in political activity. Essentially, Yemen (population between four and six millions) remains a one-man show; and it is not now likely, with the prospect of oil royalties before him, that its ruler will voluntarily relinquish his monopoly of power.

The Imam, as head of the Zaidi sect of Islam, exercises both temporal and spiritual authority and controls personally every department of state, from the treasury (several crates of gold sovereigns and Maria Theresa dollars hidden in caves in the hills) to his administration's store cupboards. The man who runs Yemen's sporadic radio service—the transmitter was the gift of an American diplomatic mission in 1945—told me that even his orders for stationery had to be approved by the Imam.

Aside from the radio, the usual means of communication and transportation in Yemen are still two- and four-legged. The Head of State maintains contact with his district governors and barefooted military units (total strength between 18,000 and 21,000) by means of runners who carry a scroll in a special sheath on their dagger-belt. Justice and taxation are arbitrary, and the army and royal bodyguard recently came to blows to decide which of them should have the privilege of collecting taxes. Bedouin tribes are required to leave a quota of their male

members in mountaintop prisons to answer for their behavior: the hostages—many of them small boys—are relieved periodically in relays, but they are badly neglected and liable at a moment's notice to torture or execution should their tribes displease the Imam. An urban family's tax assessment may depend on whether it has contributed a presentable daughter to the royal harem. An educated Palestine Arab friend of mine who occupied an administrative post in Sanaa for several years claims to have saved his three sisters from the harem only by pretending they were his wives.

THE port of Aden and eighty tawny, torrid square miles around it (total population 110,000) are administered by officials of the British Colonial Service as a Crown Colony. In the adjoining Ader Protectorate (112,000 square miles; population about 800,000) British control is indirect. Authority is divided among more than fifty largely autonomous sultans, sheikhs, and one emir, who rule on feudal or tribal lines and assert their sovereignty to the extent of imposing duties on goods passing through their areas. These internal tariffs and the vested interest of several local rulers in camel-breeding are a hindrance to overland trade and the development of road transport. Some camel-breeding sheikhs have ordered their men to attack freight-carrying trucks on sight, and refused them passage even during the great Hadhrami famines of 1943 and 1948-49 (fortunately the RAF was on hand to parachute supplies into the afflicted areas).

In hopes of unshackling internal trade and communications and inaugurating a trend towards administrative unification and modernization, the British authorities have for several months now been attempting to persuade the emir, sultans, and sheikhs of the Protectorate to federate their territories. Most of the major princelings have agreed in principle, but the initiative has aroused considerable opposition and undoubtedly helped touch off the present disorders. The camel-breeding sheikhs are naturally opposed to anything that will facilitate the encroach-

ment of wheeled transport onto their domains; others have found that their authority over their subjects wilts as blood feuds die down and modern ideas seep in, and regard federation as the thin end of a wedge that may destroy what remains of their privileges; still others fear for the substantial incomes their local tariffs earn, though the British authorities have promised to compensate them for this loss.

A major drawback is that federation would run counter to Arab tradition. Perpetual sheikhly rivalries and inter-tribal conflict over grazing rights, spheres of influence, rights of way, and the right to tribute from lesser tribes, travelers, and cultivators are (for obvious economic reasons) an integral part of desert mores. Almost every Adenese and Hadhrami sultan and sheikh has claims on or grievances against neighboring chieftains, and only respect for the RAF has restrained the most ambitious of them from embarking on campaigns of conquest and aggrandizement in emulation of Ibn Saud. Acceptance of federation would mean voluntary renunciation of all such claims and ambitions—a self-imposed humiliation dangerous in a land where the size of a ruler's following fluctuates with his prestige and *éclat*.

It is possible that the Imam of Yemen sees himself as a potential Ibn Saud: reviving a long-standing frontier dispute with the Aden authorities, he has laid claim to a substantial stretch of Protectorate territory and, fortified with assurances of Arab League and Soviet sympathy, protested against the British federation project as an infringement of his own interests in the area and a violation of the rights of its inhabitants. A partial explanation may be that, like many another Arab ruler before him, he has realized the value of anti-British heroics as an inexpensive means of diverting the attention and energies of his personal enemies and currying favor with nationalistic elements. The "Free Yemen" movement has for some time included in its program the annexation of the whole of Aden-Colony and Protectorate.

The native Adenese and Hadhrami reformist groups ought, logically, to support

the British federation project as a progressive move; but the young men in their ranks—the majority—are becoming infected with the prevailing Near Eastern nationalist virus. Influenced by the Cairo radio, and resentful despite (and possibly, subconsciously, because of) its present prosperity that Aden should be the one part of the Arabic-speaking world in which outright colonial rule survives, they are inclined to suspect everything British, including reforms.

To date, nationalism has only one achievement to its credit in the Aden Protectorate—an ugly riot in the port of Mukalla; but it is encountered in other areas either as a secondary factor underlying revolt or, in accordance with precedent in other parts of the Near East, as camouflage for vested interests. Some of the rebel tribesmen have been incited by agents of the Imam Ahmed, others by sheikhly opponents of federation. Like the Imam, the latter naturally prefer to pose, in the eyes of the impressionable, as champions of “national freedom” rather than of princely privilege; and assisted by the Cairo radio, which is working hard to fan flames of nationalism from every incidental spark, they will probably succeed in the short run in diverting reformist energies into the blind alley of nationalist agitation.

THE Sultanate of Oman (population between 500,000 and 700,000), due east of British-protected Hadhramaut, is America's oldest Arab friend. A treaty of amity and commerce between the two countries was signed in 1833. So little trade did it stimulate, however, that the United States consulate in Muscat, the capital (population 3,500), was closed down in 1915 after its bored incumbent had complained to the State Department that only two American ships had called there in sixty years. “It is respectfully submitted,” he wrote, “that two years of practically enforced idleness is not good training for one beginning a consular career.”

Fortunately for Anglo-American relations, the treaty contains no military provisions, for as this is written the Arab League secre-

tariat is wondering with bated breath how best to exploit a complaint from the “King” of Oman to the effect that his territory has been “invaded at three points by British troops, several villages having been occupied by force.” There was gay talk in Cairo of submitting the “dispute” to the UN.

After the Saudi kingdom, Oman is the largest political entity in Arabia, occupying about 900 miles of coastline. But despite its size and long-established independence, it is a member of neither the UN nor the Arab League—though its “King” has now requested admission to the latter body—and maintains even less diplomatic contact with the outside world than Yemen. The only representative of a non-Asiatic power permanently resident in Oman is the British Political Agent who lives in the fortress-like British consulate at Muscat. Semi-officially (the precise formula has never been worked out), he is also one of the principal advisers of the Head of State; and his advice is usually taken, since a British subsidy is necessary to keep Oman's finances afloat.

How comes it, then, that this suckling of the British lion is on the point of becoming an Arab League gladiator? The answer is that the Head of State who enjoys the advice of the British Political Agent in Muscat is not the effective ruler of the greater part of the country. The authority of Sultan Sir Sayyed Said ibn Taimur—a pleasant, soft-spoken, unassuming, and rather shy little man—normally extends only along the coastal plain, where the population is mainly Indian, Iranian, and Negro. The Arabs of the interior have for several decades given their allegiance to a succession of rebel Imams whose residence is generally at Naswa, in the hills southwest of Muscat; and in conformity with the dichotomous pattern of Arab politics, the Imams' authority has occasionally been challenged in turn by ambitious sheikhs of the undemarcated desert borderland between Oman and Saudi Arabia.

The present Imam, Ghaleb ibn Ali, who has taken the title “King of Oman,” has had trouble with chieftains who, attracted by the lavish subsidies the oil-rich Saudi

kingdom pays its sheikhs, are tempted to proclaim their allegiance to King Saud. At the same time sheikhly circles are buzzing with rumors that two American firms—Cities Service and Richfield Oil, both newcomers to the Near Eastern petroleum industry—have evidence of the existence of vast oil deposits in Dhofar province, at the southernmost tip of Oman. These firms hold a concession from the Sultan at Muscat, and if oil is struck it is to the Sultan that they will pay their royalties—whereupon the Imam's following would melt away overnight. Hence the Imam's patent haste to rally regional as well as local support, and obtain some sort of recognition from the Arab League, as a preliminary to asserting or at least claiming *de facto* sovereignty over an area extending as far southwards as may be necessary to force the American companies to come to terms with him. In return for Saudi support (which has included arms and money) the Imam Ghaleb has agreed to recognize Saudi sovereignty over the oasis of Buraimi.

To kill all these birds, what better missile than Anglophobia? This particular Anglophobe, however, appears to have overshot his target. British petroleum interests are eager to open up the interior of Oman for prospecting and, if oil is found in commercial quantities at Buraimi (of which more later), to build a road and perhaps a pipeline from there to the coast north of Muscat. But first, real rather than, as hitherto, merely theoretical political unity—and law and order—must be established in the name of the ruler recognized by Britain. Accordingly troops loyal to the Sultan of Muscat have been given modern arms and dispatched inland to "neutralize" the Imam. They appear to have been outstandingly successful. On December 20, 1955, Arab League headquarters in Cairo announced that "British forces" had "occupied Naswa, capital of the kingdom of Oman, and forced the king and his family to flee."

IN 1954, the rulers of Saudi Arabia and Kuwait received, respectively, 260 and 217 million dollars in oil royalties. In dis-

posing of these vast fortunes they were accountable only to themselves. Yet for all their millions, King Saud and Sheikh Sir Abdullah Salim es-Subah are less fortunate than many relatively humble Arab rulers and leaders: they possess no "nationalist" shock-absorber with which to bear the brunt of social discontent; they must face their subjects unfortified by foreign bogies; they are all too obviously sovereign and independent, masters in their respective houses, and must brave the abyss now opening ahead of them unaided and alone.

King Saud has bravely tried to improvise. He has proclaimed his conviction that ten million Arab lives should, if necessary, be sacrificed in eradicating Israel. He has accused "the British" of massacre, pillage, and other barbaric behavior in the disputed oasis of Buraimi, on the northwestern border of Oman. He has ostentatiously expelled his father's shrewd British adviser, seventy-year-old St.-John Philby. In the course of the first press conference of his reign, at Jedda in mid-July 1955, he expressed the hope that Southern Arabia would soon be liberated from the British. Yet more and more of his subjects are confiding in one another, and in foreigners they meet, their hope that Arabia will soon be liberated from the locust-like Saudi family.

The late King Abdul-Aziz ibn Saud, founder of the present Saudi state, sought to consolidate his kingdom by taking a wife from every important tribe. Today his male descendants alone number rather more than three hundred. Every one of them is a direct charge on the state budget—the older princes, for whom senior government posts are reserved, receiving \$360,000 a year plus the upkeep of their palaces and special allowances when they visit other countries. Prudent members of the royal family salt away a good deal of wealth abroad. Their investments and gold purchases contribute to the prosperity of a flourishing section of the Beirut money market, and a recent Saudi threat to take this custom elsewhere if Lebanon associated with the Baghdad Pact or any other Western-sponsored grouping

had the desired effect. Newspapers and periodicals in many parts of the Arabic-speaking world are subsidized lest they publicize Saudi extravagance.

Between 1952 and 1954, public health, education, and other social services for this largely illiterate country of four or five millions (the exact figure is anybody's guess) were allotted thirteen million dollars. Reliable figures for 1955 are not yet available, though it is known that "internal security" swallowed up some ninety-five million dollars this last year. Most of this sum was spent on the army, whose role is essentially that of a domestic gendarmerie with the task of keeping the tribes in order; but about eight million dollars went to tribal sheikhs and other notables in the form of direct payments in return for keeping the peace.

Blessed with neither his father's outstanding strength of character nor the unchallengeable allegiance he commanded, the present ruler, King Saud ibn Abdul-Aziz, is compelled to purchase the loyalty of his relatives and sheikhs by raising their allowances and subsidies year by year, as well as increasing his military budget and acquiescing in a degree of corruption in official circles unparalleled even in the Levant states. All this imposes a cumulative strain on his resources and when, as has happened twice in recent years, expenditure overtakes revenue, government employees and local merchants supplying the royal family have to go unpaid, and educational and development funds are raided. It is the multi-millionaire monarch's efforts to make ends meet that have driven him to the undignified expedients of entering the tanker business and attempting by force and bribery to acquire the oasis of Buraimi.

In his tanker venture King Saud's mentor is the Greek-Argentinian ship owner Aristotle Socrates Onassis. As yet only one tanker—though it is the largest in the world—sails under the Saudi flag, but the aim is to build up a fleet of about thirty to compete with American and British operators in shipping oil from Arabia to Western Europe—if "compete" is the word. The new Saudi-Onassis

tanker company (the Saudis are the major shareholders) was fortified at birth with a royal decree granting its vessels preference over all but those of the Arabian-American Oil Company, the producing company, which carries about half the total volume of oil shipped; and even Aramco has been given to understand by the Saudis that its fleet, too, will ultimately be elbowed out.

THE Buraimi oasis, beneath which are thought to be important oil deposits, consists of a group of eight impoverished villages on the northeastern fringe of the largely uncharted "Empty Quarter" (Rub el-Khali) of Arabia. Six of its villages acknowledged until recently the nominal suzerainty of the British-protected Sheikh of Abu-Dhabi, and two that of the Sultan of Muscat. But when, in August 1952, a Saudi emissary arrived with an escort of forty warriors and a caravan laden with gold sovereigns, ball-point pens, cigarette lighters, and food, Buraimi's 9,000 inhabitants were, for the most part, fairly easily persuaded to switch their allegiances. British-led Arab mercenaries recruited in nearby Persian Gulf sheikhdoms were dispatched against the Saudis, while RAF Vampire jet fighters put on a show overhead, and a long-drawn-out Anglo-Saudi dispute ensued. King Saud formally accused the British of "massacring innocents and pillaging their homes and inflicting barbaric treatment on men and women." The British government accused King Saud of attempting to win over the brother of the Sheikh of Abu-Dhabi with a bribe of eighty million dollars. The efforts of an international arbitration tribunal in Geneva broke down when, according to the British Foreign Office, the Saudi representative, Sheikh Yusef Yassin, tried to bribe its members. There, for the moment, the matter rests, though the Saudi government has threatened to take it up with the Security Council.

Nor is the Buraimi dispute the only cause of the present Anglo-Saudi warm war. The Saudis have long been irritated by British attempts—as they see it—to dominate the Arab world by building up the power, and

if possible extending the dominions of, the Hashemite royal family (now installed in Iraq and Jordan), which Abdul-Aziz expelled from the Hejaz thirty years ago. The late King Abdullah of Jordan made little effort to conceal his hope that one day his Arab Legion would be strong enough to march south and reconquer his Arabian patrimony, though far from encouraging him, as the Saudis suspected, his British advisers firmly vetoed his irredentist plans. Since Abdullah's death, and despite the deposition of his unbalanced anti-British son Talal, the tide in Jordan, even in some royal quarters, has steadily turned against Britain and in favor of a reconciliation with the Saudis, but Jordan's economic dependence on Britain has naturally operated in favor of the *status quo*.

The Baghdad Pact, as a result of which Iraq is now receiving a dangerous quantity of American and British arms, brought matters to a head, and Saudi dollars are now being spent on anti-Western and anti-Hashemite (even republican!) propaganda in both Iraq and Jordan. Jordan, the weaker of the two, is receiving the greater attention, though not quite so much as Whitehall officials, to cover their discomfiture over the December riots and now the firing of General Glubb, try to make out. The Cairo junta is reportedly willing, if it gets the Western aid it is holding out for, to share with King Saud the cost of paying Jordan an annual subsidy to replace that which she receives from Britain so as to enable her to cut her British tow-rope and enter the Egyptian-Saudi-Syrian neutralist alliance. The magnetism of the resultant bloc would be such that Iraq's gravitation towards it, and her abrogation of the flimsy Baghdad Pact, would only be a matter of time.

THE very word Saudi has come in recent years to be associated to such an extent with extravagance, irresponsibility, corruption, and dissolution that the Western world tends to forget that for millions of Moslems from whom the facts of the situation are concealed, King Saud is doubly important

as ruler of the holy places of Islam and nominal head of the Wahabi sect. Wahabi puritanism and piety are renowned—and, generally, recoiled from, as too uncompromisingly austere—throughout the Moslem world. And indeed, more than 90 per cent of King Saud's subjects still lead lives as primitive, as compulsorily austere, as the tenets of Wahabism require. In certain areas "vigilantes" of the Wahabi Ikhwan, a brotherhood founded by the late King Abdul-Aziz, may still take such action as they deem appropriate against humble citizens of the kingdom found drinking alcohol, smoking, or playing music in public. Those who break the fast of Ramadhan may be manacled and imprisoned. Women are denied "human rights" considered elementary in most countries on earth.

In mid-June 1955, it was announced in Riyadh, the Saudi capital, that women would henceforth be forbidden to visit other countries, even on medical grounds and even if accompanied by their husbands (the previous proviso). All girls' schools, it was also officially stated, were to be closed (there were only a few, anyhow, opened in recent years), and male Saudi Arabians would be permitted to study abroad only in exceptional circumstances. Furthermore, all foreign newspapers and magazines containing pictures were to be banned. The aim, it was frankly admitted in Saudi official quarters, was to insulate Arabian society from Western example and influence, social and political. Palace circles, alarmed by a strike of oil workers and the distribution of leaflets signed "National Reform Front," denouncing royal extravagance and tyranny, were anxious to stem the rising tide of enlightenment lest it erode the foundations of their rule.

How does the virus of social and political discontent seep through the baffles and filters of so absolute a regime? Partly, as in Yemen and Aden, through the agency of merchants and their Beirut- and Cairo-educated sons, the latter constituting the nucleus of the new, articulate, but politically underprivileged professional and military middle class;

partly in the wake of American oilmen and of the workers Aramco has brought in from other, more advanced, Arab states; and partly with the aid of the radio. The masses are still too ignorant and apathetic to count as a serious political force, but King Saud's penchant for titivating them with xenophobic outbursts, and his reliance upon religious obscurantism to perpetuate their fatalism and political apathy, plays into the hands of spiritual dignitaries hostile to Western Christian—in this context American—penetration of the Islamic Holy Land and genuinely shocked by royal dissoluteness. Such dignitaries still have a greater influence over the sedentary masses (though not over the nomadic tribes, whose significance, however, is dwindling fast) than any other potential leaders, and should ever a middle-class revolutionary group—say, a committee of army officers on the Egyptian model—enlist them as allies, King Saud's days would be numbered.

TINY Kuwait, too, has an absolute ruler flanked by a fairly voracious family, but he is distinguished by a genuine desire to uplift his people, even to the extent of providing them with the externals of a Western welfare state. The total population of about 200,000 (including 50,000 recently arrived non-Kuwaitis) is concentrated almost entirely in and around the one town, and there can scarcely be a family in the state that has not derived some benefit from the oil boom.

Kuwait now has a supply of drinkable water—filtered sea-water—for the first time in its history (there are no wells in the territory, which is entirely desert, and water has hitherto been imported by dhow from the Shatt el-Arab, the common estuary of the Tigris and Euphrates, fifty miles away). A sixteen-million-dollar sewage system has been built. Superbly equipped hospitals, a mobile

clinic, and a sanatorium offer free treatment to all who require it. Forty schools have been opened, a third of them for girls: more is being spent on education in Kuwait than in Saudi Arabia, whose population is thirty times bigger.

Teachers, doctors, technicians, and clerical workers have had to be brought into Kuwait from outside, and their influence, as well as the education available to the rising generation, has opened the eyes of a now vociferous section of Kuwaiti society to the fact that, pampered as they are by their new social services, they are still autocratically governed, subject occasionally to the whims of members of the ruling family who are less enlightened than their Sheikh, and denied any say in the disposal of oil royalties. This last point, Kuwaitis argue, may not be of great importance at the moment, but if the present Sheikh were liquidated by one of his relatives or by an external agency, they might find themselves reduced to the condition of their Saudi Arabian neighbors.

Iraq's royal family has a long-standing feud with the rulers of Kuwait, but Kuwaitis are most afraid, today, of King Saud. Learning recently that signatures were being collected in Kuwait for a petition to the Sheikh requesting the establishment of representative institutions, and that the well-intentioned Sheikh was expected in palace circles to concede at least the election of a state advisory council, King Saud addressed him an urgent warning against such steps. The Sheikh has consequently modified his attitude and forbidden "political agitation"—reportedly because he fears Saudi military intervention.

In his message to the Sheikh, King Saud said: "Once they develop, popular movements undermine the foundations of established governments." He may yet prove to have coined his own epitaph.